

HANNIBAL AND ST. JOSEPH RAILROAD.

MEMORIAL
OF THE
LEGISLATURE OF MISSOURI,
RELATIVE TO

A grant of land for the construction of the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad.

FEBRUARY 27, 1849.

Laid upon the table, and ordered to be printed.

MEMORIAL to Congress praying a grant of land for the construction of the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad.

To the honorable the Congress of the United States :

The memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Missouri respectfully sheweth : That the people of Missouri feel a deep and lively interest on the subject of internal improvement and see the absolute necessity of commencing some public works, in order more successfully to avail themselves of the natural advantages by which they are surrounded, in opening a way to markets for the surplus products of their labor and industry—in inducing a speedy settlement and cultivation of the vast amount of rich and fertile lands, which remain uninhabited in the State, and in aiding in the development of the inexhaustible mines of iron, coal, lead, copper, and other valuable minerals which abound in various parts of the State, and which need only to be explored and fully opened to make them add incalculably to the wealth of Missouri and the Union.

Your memorialists state that one object of internal improvement of great magnitude and importance, and in regard to which the people more immediately interested therein are manifesting much interest, is the construction of a railroad from the city of Hannibal on the Mississippi river, to Palmyra, and thence to St. Joseph on the Missouri river, thereby connecting these two great rivers and furnishing the people of northern Missouri a more convenient outlet to the markets nearest them, and at no distant day by means of other improvements now in contemplation and which will doubtless be made, connecting them with the lakes of the North, and thus with the markets of the eastern cities. Hannibal and St. Joseph, the beginning and terminating points of the proposed road, are about one hundred

and eighty-six miles apart, each containing an enterprising population, which is increasing with almost incredible rapidity, and both surrounded by a large extent of country as rich and fertile as any in the world, and, from their favorable situation, promising in a few years to become great and populous cities. The road by which it is proposed to unite these two places will pass through organized counties, and a country abounding in woodland and prairie, with a soil along the whole line equal to any in the West, capable of the greatest amount of production and almost every species of agricultural staple, and every way susceptible of the highest state of cultivation.

It is believed that a railroad may be constructed at an expense much less than the usual cost of such improvements; the route passes through a beautiful and level country, furnishing abundant material necessary to the construction of so important a work. Your memorialists would further represent, that in consequence of the remoteness of the country along the proposed road, and the great amount of public land remaining unsold in the State of Missouri, many years must elapse before any considerable amount of said land along the line will be settled and cultivated without some such improvement is made. Your memorialists would therefore ask that Congress donate the State of Missouri for the purpose of constructing said road, alternate sections of the public and unappropriated lands of twenty-four miles in width, along and near the line upon which it is proposed to establish the same. With the aid thus added to the means which the State of Missouri could appropriate to this object, and which those interested would cheerfully invest in such a work, it is confidently believed that it might be completed in a few years, and thus greatly promote the interests of the State and general government. All the public lands contiguous to the route, would be at once enhanced in value, taken up and settled, and it would be the means of bringing into market government lands more remotely situated, and which will remain otherwise for many years to come, unavailable and unproductive to the general government. Such a road would lead immediately to the construction of branches diverging therefrom in every direction opening for the farmer an easy way to market and making the great State of Missouri, what nature designed her to be, one of the most delightful abodes for man on this continent. Such a road, also, would open an outlet to the Territories of New Mexico, California, and Oregon, and would afford to the general government means of transportation at seasons of the year when the Missouri could not be navigated. Your memorialists in view of the importance of the object aimed to be accomplished, and the fact that the lands owned by the general government on or near the line will be enhanced in value to an extent which will in a short time far more than remunerate the general government, cannot but hope that an early and favorable response will be given to the prayer of the memorial. And as in duty bound, your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

Approved February 5, 1849.

Resolved by the Senate, (the House of Representatives concurring therein,) That it shall be the duty of the secretary of State to transmit to each of our senators and representatives in Congress a copy of all memorials and resolutions passed by the present General Assembly.